REGIONAL PLAN
OUTLINE

A PROPOSAL FOR THE CONTENT & APPROACH TO THE PEACE RIVER REGIONAL PLAN

peace river
regional planning commission

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In the Peace River Region there is in place a preliminary regional plan entitled "Patterns for the Future" which was adopted by the Regional Planning Commission on September 27, 1976. The Planning Act requires that a regional plan, which will replace the preliminary regional plan, be completed and ratified by the Minister of Municipal Affairs by December 31, 1982. Although there has been some policy formulated to date which will be incorporated into the regional plan this report is the first comprehensive overview of the content and approach to the regional plan. As such it represents a starting point which will be used as a guide and outline in the preparation of the regional plan.

The following summary is designed to give the reader a skeleton review of the contents of the outline. It should be used for perusal purposes only. The reader is encouraged to read the full report to gain an appreciation and comprehension of the ideas and positions therein.

1. The Regional Plan and the Planning Act

The legal authority to prepare and implement regional plans is derived from Sections 2 and 45 to 58 inclusive of the Planning Act (1977). These indicate the role of the regional plan and specify how it is to be prepared, reviewed, adopted and amended.

2. Approach to Regional Planning

There is a variety of approaches which could be taken in the preparation of a regional plan. This outline develops an approach based on the consideration of seven factors. It suggests that the region would benefit from a plan which provides a framework and guideline for local planning, takes into account the characteristics indigenous to this planning area, balances the use of prescriptive and non-prescriptive policies, responds to the apparent expectations of the Alberta Planning Board, considers the requirements of the Planning Act, addresses the variety of roles played by participants in the regional planning process and stresses co-ordination of planning efforts among municipalities. Each of these factors is examined individually.

3. Planning Model for the Peace River Region

The region is a series of components interacting in certain ways which collectively form a system. The representation of this system in abstract form is a planning model. This is a means of perceiving the region in order to assist in policy formulation.

There are three main categories to the planning model. These include the core variables which are related mostly to the physical characteristics of the region and include zones, sub-regions, settlement types, districts etcetra. A second category is the process of change and development which impacts upon the core variables. This category includes somewhat intangible components which may be internal or external to the region.

Examples are economic conditions, government policy, population growth and decline, expanding and decreasing employment opportunities, investment decisions and so forth. A third category is the process of regional planning which is actually a subset of the second category. Components of this category include the planning process, citizen and private interest participation and local, regional and provincial agencies.

4. Growth Strategy

This is a very critical part of the regional plan. It should be noted that a growth strategy may be designed to address increasing, static or declining growth. It is concerned with the form of regional growth (i.e., diversified economic activity with concentration on resources development, agriculture and related services), distribution of regional growth (i.e., sub-regional basis or other patterns), the rate/level of regional growth (i.e., expressed as preferred future population levels), and the roles to be played by various member municipalities (i.e., depends on the type of municipality and goals to be achieved through the strategy). The strategy will evolve from the analysis of growth studies.

5. Nature and Structure of Policy

This too is a critical part of the plan. Structured policy is policy which is clearly related to objectives which are clearly related to goals which are clearly related to problems and issues. There are three types of policy including implementation which is action oriented, control which is regulatory and advocacy which is advisory. Policy language can be prescriptive, or reflective.

The appendix includes a matrix which may be used to test policy comprehensiveness or to formulate policy.

6. Contents and Components of the Regional Plan

This section of the report includes a suggested outline for the regional plan. Parts of the plan are as follows:

(i) Opening Remarks - an introductory section which includes a description of the region.

(ii) Strategic Orientation - includes problems, issues, goals and objectives.

(iii) Strategy for Growth and Development

(iv) Policy Chapters - for each chapter there is a background or introductory section, objectives addressed by policy, statement of policy direction, technical justification and appropriate policy topics. Policy chapters include: Agricultural Land Policy, Resource Development, Environment Policy, Open

Space, Recreation and Parks System, Settlement Policy, Land Use Policy, Housing Policy, Transportation, Physical Infrastructure and Energy Transmission, Regional Services and Planning Framework.

(v) Implementation Processes and Mechanisms - this is concerned with the plan adoption process, interpretation of policies, amendments, conformity, hierarchy of planning documents and directions for subdivision.

(vi) Monitoring and Review - various methods are listed. Monitoring is a continual process which tests whether policies are achieving the objectives. Review is a periodic activity which takes a wholistic approach and evaluates the entire regional plan, re-examines problems, issues, goals and policy.

Concluding Note

In addition to the Regional Plan the Alberta Planning Board advises that a technical background report(s), public consultation report and annual monitoring report should be submitted for their consideration.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is a proposal for the content of and approach to the regional plan for the Peace River Region. It is intended to be used by staff as a guide during the preparation of the regional plan. It is also intended to give the Regional Planning Commission, provincial agencies and others an indication of the direction which staff may be taking. Because it is a guide the regional plan produced by staff may be different than the regional plan envisioned by this paper. Although the approach to regional planning, the perception of the region and the contents of a regional plan as described in this outline will probably be quite evident in the regional plan.

The paper is divided into six sections. Section One considers the regional plan in terms of its legislative base. Appropriate sections of the current and former Planning Acts are discussed. These give a broad indication of the content and directions appropriate to a regional plan. Section Two discusses an approach to regional planning for the Peace River Region. This is based on a number of factors, indigenous to the region and otherwise. Section Three describes the region in terms of a relatively simple planning model. It outlines the components and structure of the model which is intended to form a basis for the perception of the region. Section Four indicates the need for a growth strategy and describes the method by which this strategy is to be formulated. Section Five examines the nature and structure of policy. It introduces a matrix which may be used to evaluate the comprehensiveness of policy in addressing the model, goals and objectives. Section Six proposes the contents of a draft regional plan for the Peace River Region. It outlines an introduction to the plan, strategic orientation, strategy for growth and development, functional policy areas, implementation, monitoring and review mechanisms.

1

THE REGIONAL PLAN & THE PLANNING ACT

1. THE REGIONAL PLAN AND THE PLANNING ACT

Sections of the Act which are particularly relevant to regional plans include Sections 2 and 45 to 58 inclusive. The role of the regional plan can generally be interpreted as being a vehicle by which the purpose of the Act, as stipulated in Section 2, is realized. Section 2 states;

> "purpose of this Act and the regulations is to provide means whereby plans and related measures may be prepared and adopted to
>
> (a) achieve the orderly, economical and beneficial development and use of land and patterns of human settlement, and
>
> (b) maintain and improve the quality of the physical environment within which patterns of human settlement are situated in Alberta without infringing on the rights of individuals except to the extent that is necessary for the greater public interest."

The functions of "providing for proper development, land use and human settlement" and ensuring "the quality of the physical environment" are reinforced by Section 46 of the Act which stipulates that a regional plan shall provide for present and future land use and development of the region. This section also permits the regional plan to regulate and control use and development within the region. However, the extent and magnitude of such regulation and control seems to be very narrow if one considers the comments rendered by the Alberta Planning Board on the draft plans submitted to date for their review.

Unlike the former Act the present Act doesn't specify the contents of a plan except as inferred by Section 46. In spite of this it seems that regional plans continue to be formulated and structured in accordance with Section 69 of the former Act. Specifically, regional plans;

- are prepared on the basis of comprehensive background information,
- divide the region into areas of land use classes,
- contain a schedule, not necessarily comprehensive or detailed, of permitted or recommended land uses within the land use classes,
- include proposals relating to the provision of roads and utilities and the use of reserve lands,
- specify phasing of development and infrastructure and,
- propose the financing and programming of public development projects and capital works.

Although it is no longer in effect, Section 69 of the former Act gives a good indication of and perhaps may be used as a guide for the contents of current regional plans. Of course, this should only be a guide since Section 69 has no legal status.

The remaining relevant sections of the present Act deal with the processes involved in amending and approving the draft plan and, as such, offer little direction as to the approach to be taken or content of a draft regional plan.

2

APPROACH TO THE REGIONAL PLAN

2. APPROACH TO THE REGIONAL PLAN

The reasons for considering an approach to regional planning is to establish a philosophy or understanding on which to base the regional plan.

There is a spectrum of approaches which might be taken in preparing a regional plan. These are distinguished by the emphasis of the plan and the local and regional conditions existing within the planning area. The basic approach which should be inherent to all regional plans is the recognition of regional planning as being a process by which member municipalities work together to formulate and implement regional goals and objectives.

only where reg. interests are involved

The region would benefit from a plan which provides a framework and guideline for local planning, takes into account the characteristics indigenous to this planning area, balances the use of prescriptive and non-prescriptive policies, considers the apparent expectations of the Alberta Planning Board, responds to the requirements of the Planning Act, addresses the variety of roles played by participants in the regional planning process and stresses co-ordination of planning efforts among municipalities. The approach encouraged by this paper is based on satisfying these factors. Each is examined individually.

(i) The Regional Plan as a Framework for Local Planning

The Planning Act places the regional plan in a dominant position in that all other planning documents must conform to it. The hierarchy of planning documents should be structured such that a lower order document evolves from a higher order document. For example, area structure plans evolve from general municipal plans which evolves from the regional plan. In order to permit this evolution from higher to lower the regional plan must stress a framework for land use, growth and development decisions and de-emphasize regulation. For example:

- A regional plan should recognize the interaction between municipalities and provide for it whereas a local plan stresses policy within the local area of jurisdiction.
- A regional plan should recognize the local plan as a vechicle to adapt regional policy for implementation at the local level.
- A regional plan should stress the need for public participation in the preparation of local planning documents.
- A regional plan should illustrate directions for growth on a regional and sub-regional basis rather than prescribing growth levels on a municipal basis.

- A regional plan should stress comprehensiveness in its policy whereas a local plan should stress detail in its policy.

- A regional plan should concentrate its prescriptiveness in matters of regional significance whereas a local plan should stress its prescriptiveness in matters of local significance.

- A regional plan should stress development guidelines rather than development standards.

- A regional plan should recommend classes of land use appropriate to various types of municipalities rather than specifying land use to a particular municipality.

(ii) The Nature of the Peace River Region

In developing an approach to regional planning there are two issues of concern with respect to the nature of the Peace River Region which should be considered. These are the type of region this is and whether there are any indigenous characteristics meriting special attention.

The Peace River Region may be described as an agricultural region in evolution. The following illustrates this typology.

- In the past the region has been primarily an agricultural region whose settlement structure evolved in response to the need to service the agriculture sector. Many communities still retain and may continue to retain this service centre function as its major function.

- The region has experienced some resource related activity which has been responsible for a significant portion of its growth over the past two decades. It has considerable potential for continued resource development. Although agriculùtre will continue to be a very important activity growth in the regional economic base is expected to be concentrated in the resource sector. This sector will be the main souce/impetus of regional growth in the future.

- The population has and will continue to become gradually more urbanized.

The transitional nature of this region indicates the need for a plan which responds to a changing economic base and a changing population. It must accommodate and protect agriculture since this is expected to remain an important sector. This also implies maintaining the associated settlement structure. Concurrently, the plan must respond to the growth demands arising from resource development which will capture an increasing share of the economic base. As the population becomes more urbanized its demands may change. This too must be addressed by the plan.

There are a number of characteristics which might be considered indigenous to this region. These also must be considered when developing the plan. They are as follows.

- The region has two types of areas within its boundary. These include the agricultural area (Yellow Zone) and its associated settlement pattern of hamlets, villages, towns and the city and; the resource frontier (Green Zone) and its associated activities and characteristics. Among other characteristics the latter tends to be a resource sink with some of the communities in the former functioning as service centres.

- There is a range of population concentrations within the region. That is, sparsely populated in some parts and somewhat concentrated in others. The settlement pattern is such that there is considerable distance between incorporated municipalities in parts of the region.

- The magnitude of growth may be perceived differently in this region. What may be considered low levels of growth in other regions may be quite significant and acceptable in this region - particularly in the smaller municipalities.

- Since the economic base appears to be increasingly concentrated in resource development the region will become increasingly vulnerable to the boom and bust cycles associated with resource development, the impact of this on local municipalities and the impact to the region as a whole.

- The immense size, low density, range of population concentrations, settlement structure and the high number of local governments may present significant problems in the formulation, application and implementation of policy.

- There is a diversified physical environment throughout the region.

- The nature and attitudes of people in this region may be unlike those in other regions. This results from the relatively brief history of the region, ethnic composition, rural/pioneer traditions etcetra.

(iii) <u>Prescriptive and Non-prescriptive Policies</u>

Deciding on the degree of prescriptiveness in a regional plan is a matter of deciding the extent to which the municipal governments will use the regional plan as the framework for local planning. To the extent that a non-prescriptive regional plan is used to formulate local policy it functions as a framework for planning. This surely is the intent of the regional plan. However policies are disregarded at

the local level and regional concerns are sacrificed in favour of local ones the plan no longer functions as a planning framework. In this case the RPC could undertake mediative measures with member municipalities to encourage adherence to regional policy. However, failing that the residual solution could be to make the policies prescriptive.

There seems to be an inverse relationship between the degree of prescriptiveness of a regional plan and the acceptability of it at the local level. That is, the less prescriptive a regional plan the more acceptable it is.

The approach should be one which balances the use of both types of policy. The use of non-prescriptive policy is favoured in matters of clearly local concern. Policy should clearly demonstrate the preferred pattern, choice or decision from the regional perspective while leaving compliance advisable rather than mandatory. In matter of clearly regional concern and importance, which run the risk of being jeopardized by local priorities, policy should be prescriptive thereby making compliance mandatory. For the substantial grey area between these two extremes policy should clearly demonstrate preferred guidelines and generally be written in a non-prescriptive fashion. However, this should be monitored. If municipal governments consistently disregard non-prescriptive policies and vary significantly from preferred guidelines, the policies should be amended and perhaps made prescriptive.

(iv) Apparent Expectations of the Alberta Planning Board

It is difficult to predict with any precision the expectations of the Alberta Planning Board relative to regional plans. Its expectations may evolve over a period of time as more regional plans are submitted and a broader comparison base is created, as the results from the regional planning system study are made available and as instructions from the Minister of Municipal Affairs dictate. However, the following observations may be worth considering when writing the regional plan.

Based on the review of the draft regional plans submitted thus far there appears to be two somewhat paradoxical attitudes taken by the Board towards regional plans. The first attitude, consistent with the requirement of the Act, is that the regional plan must be comprehensive enough to guide and direct development by providing for present and future land use and development. The second attitude is the desire to protect and encourage local autonomy possibly at the expense of detailed and comprehensive policy. This is manifested by the tendency of the Board to discourage prescriptive policies in the plan which may then have the effect of jeopardizing the implementation of certain goals and objectives. The response to this situation must be to adopt an approach which balances the need for flexibility to permit

local autonomy while providing enough direction, by way of a growth strategy and clearly articulated guidelines for development, to ensure that goals and objectives are realized.

The expectations of the Board can be deduced by bearing in mind the criticisms common to all regional plans submitted thus far. These include;

- The lack of a clearly articulated and explicit growth strategy which adequately describes the roles of the member municipalities.
- The lack of structured policy where problems, issues, goals, objectives and policies are clearly related to one another.
- The lack, in some cases, of sufficient technical justification to support either the growth strategy, such as it is, or various policies.
- The use of policy that is illegal under the Act by either using incorrect language in the policy or including policies which are ultra vires.
- The lack of adequate provisions for implementation.
- The lack of acceptable mechanisms for monitoring and review.

(v) Requirements of the Planning Act

The Act implicitly requires that the plan contain policies which are legal. The powers of the Commission must not be exceeded nor should the policies be ultra vires. Legality could be generally demonstrated by relating the policies formulated in the plan to a specific section of the Act. It would be useful if the relative jurisdictions and responsibilities of all agencies involved in regional planning (or regional development) were clearly established by the Act. However, this is not the case. (The Inter-Agency Planning Branch is undertaking some study in this area.)

By virtue of Section 46 which implies that the regional plan must provide for growth and development but not necessarily by regulating land use, it seems inevitable that the document must be more advisory than prescriptive while still providing clear directions for growth and development. The approach implied by this suggests that the regional plan should concentrate on a growth strategy* and guidelines for development as a means of providing direction. It should stress suggestive and advisory policy as the means of implementation.

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*growth strategy - refers to a strategy for dealing with increasing, static and/or declining growth.

Other sections of the Act indicate that Land Use By-laws and lower order planning documents must conform to the regional plan. Therefore, regional plan policy must be written such that it can be incorporated into or reflected by local planning documents.

(vi) Relative Roles of Participants in the Regional Planning Process

Regional planning continues after the formulation of the regional plan. It is a process in which a variety of participants contribute in various ways during the plan preparation and beyond. The plan must recognize this process and respond to it by considering who participates and how.

The Regional Planning Commission plays three types of roles in the process of regional planning. These are formulator of the regional plan including all the associated activities, regional monitor which includes the identification of trends, problems and solutions and coordinator which includes advising local municipalities and the province on planning issues and implementing policy. After the regional plan is formulated the monitor and coordinator roles become most important.

Roles of the municipal governments in regional planning are to contribute to the formulation of policy, to implement the policies of the regional plan (ie., framework for local planning), to at least ratify if not assist in the formulation of goals and objectives and to contribute to the amendment of the regional plan by identifying problems, policy deficiencies, new goals, objectives, etcetra.

The role of the public is viewed as being one of reacting to policy after it is formulated. This assumes that many of the concerns that could be addressed by a massive public participation campaign prior to and during the formulation of the regional plan is addressed via contact with municipal governments. It is acknowledged therefore that the public has the implied role of contributing to policy formulation, goals, objectives, amendments to regional plans etcetra.

The role of the Province in regional planning is to ensure that the policies of the various provincial departments exercising authority within the planning area are reflected in the regional plan and that no policy in the regional plan conflicts with provincial policy. An additional critical role is as implementor to regional plan policies via provincial policies applying to the regional planning area. They will act predominantly as a review and advisory agency and be responsible for approval of the plan.

Other actors involved in regional planning are the school boards and the hospital boards. Their main role is to review policies with the intent of ensuring that future requirements for schools and hospitals are adequately addressed in the regional plan.

It becomes obvious that the process of regional planning is transactive and requires a substantial amount of feedback among participants in order to be effective. The feedback/consultative aspect must be built into the regional plan particularly the implementation sections. It should be specifically a part of the approach to design policy such that these relative roles are evident.

(vii) Coordination of Planning Efforts

This region is expansive, sparsely populated, heterogeneous contains a great number of municipal jurisdictions within its boundaries and is under the jurisdiction of many agencies. These conditions make problem identification, policy formulation and implementation difficult. As a general solution to these problems the approach to the regional plan should create policy which stresses coordination, cooperation and joint planning between and among municipalities and the province, between urban and rural areas and other agencies.

Approach to the Regional Plan - Summary

The following points constitute the approach to be taken in the Peace River Regional Plan.

- The regional plan should provide a framework for local planning by stressing preferred directions and guidelines and de-emphasizing regulation whenever possible.
- The regional plan should recognize the planning area as an agricultural region in evolution and provide for its changing economic base and population.
- The regional plan should consider the special characteristics indigenous to this region.
- The regional plan should be non-prescriptive in its policy areas of local concern and jurisdiction and prescriptive if necessary in areas of clearly regional concern and jurisdiction.
- The regional plan should generally be non-prescriptive in areas of unclear jurisdiction and municipal/regional concern - subject to monitoring and amendment.
- The regional plan should concentrate on a clearly articulated growth strategy and guidelines for development which respond to goals and objectives.
- Policy in the regional plan must be legal and reflect the intent of the Act.

- The regional plan should include policy which acknowledges and provides for the consultative/feedback aspect of the ongoing regional planning process.

- Policy development in the regional plan should be based on the encouragement of coordination of planning efforts among municipalities and agencies.

3

PLANNING MODEL FOR THE PEACE RIVER REGION

3. PLANNING MODEL FOR THE PEACE RIVER REGION PLANNING AREA

(i) Definition

A planning model, as intended in this outline, is an expression of the nature and characteristics of the planning area. It identifies the component parts, explains their interrelationships and thereby generates a picture of what the region is in terms of a system. This is expressed as a model which is a method of illustrating and perceiving the system in abstract form for the purpose of better understanding the region.

(ii) Why a Planning Model?

The planning model is a necessary part of the regional plan formulation process because it provides a tool or aid for policy development.

The model may assist in formulating a growth strategy in that it too must recognize an order or pattern of settlements within the planning area. It must be sensitive to the interrelationships between the various types of settlements and must address other components operating in the planning area which affect the type, extent and direction of growth and development. In so doing the growth strategy is in fact responding to the components of the system which can be expressed by a planning model.

(iii) Components of the Peace River Region Model

There are 3 basic components which constitute a descriptive model of the Peace River Region. These are:

1. Core Variables - which are a series of components mostly related to the physical characteristics of the Peace River Region. These components and their structure are illustrated on Diagram 2.

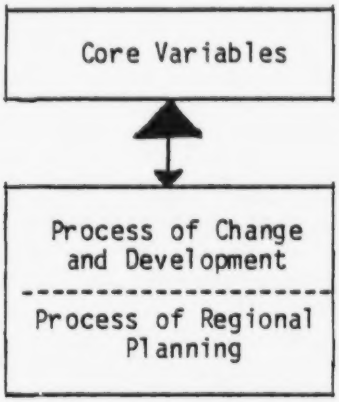
2. The Process of Change and Development - which is composed of many factors, non-empirical and otherwise, from both private and public sectors, internal and external to the region.

3. The Process of Regional Planning - which is actually a subset of the process of change and development. This is isolated as a separate component because it is the major component in the process of change and development over which planners and the Regional Planning Commission can exert influence to meet goals and objectives.

The overall structure of these three variables is illustrated on Diagram 1. The core variables and the process of change and development impact upon and are impacted by each other. Although, the impact of the process of change and development on the core variables is greater than vice versa. Each component and parts within the components relate to each other in a limited or intimate way. Each component may require policy which addresses the component directly or policy which recognizes the relationship of the component to other components.

Diagram 1:

GENERAL STRUCTURE OF MODEL VARIABLES



(iv) Description of the Peace River Region Model

(Refer to Diagram 2)

Some comments about the model.

- The model is essentially an organizational chart which breaks the system down into its component parts and demonstrates the general relationship or structure of these component parts.
- The model is symbolic in that it illustrates or represents the component parts of the system.
- The model illustrates the components which may need to be addressed by policy. It does not demonstrate how these are to be addressed.

- This particular model is not subject to a great deal of manipulation since it is descriptive and therefore represents the variables of the system and the general rather than intricate relationships among these variables. However, the system itslef may be subject to analysis by modelling techniques. For example, by examining specific relationships within the system and expressing these as mathematical equations or by representing elements of the system in paradigm form or by generating scenarios, etc. These exercises may be useful as a means of better understanding the system which may then assist in formulating more effective policy.

Overview of the Model (Diagram 2)

The region is composed of two distinct zones. Within the zones are sub-regions and districts all of which contain the natural systems. The sub-regions and districts are further distinguished by areas of special jurisdiction, transportation systems, types of settlements and land use. The process of urbanization and resource based activities impact upon the sub-regions and districts and in particular upon the settlement types. These are the core variables.

The process of change and development is external to but impacts heavily upon the core variables. The structure of the components of the process of change and development is extremely complex. Therefore they are shown as intersecting circles to represent that they are all interconnected.

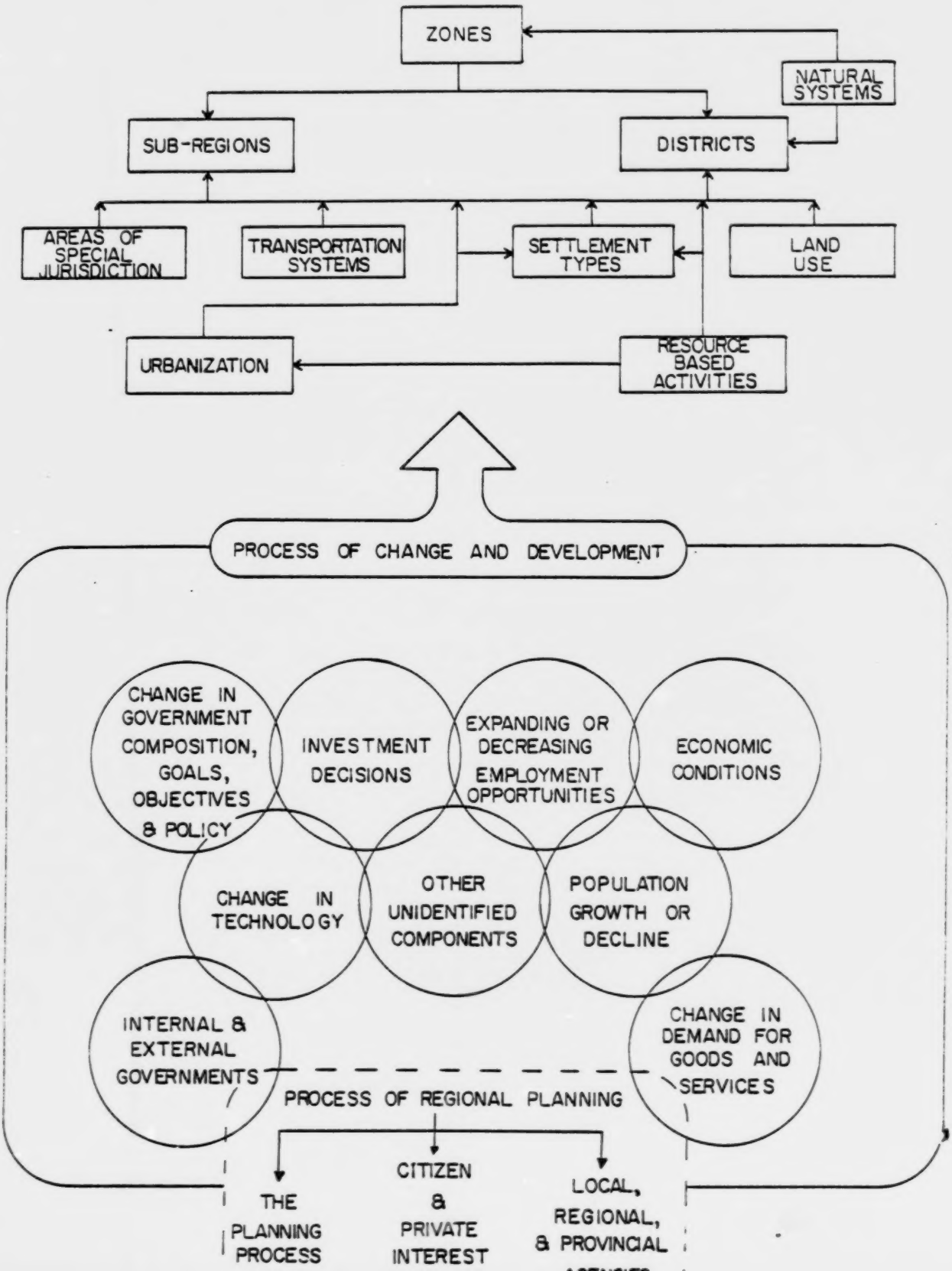
The process of regional planning, which is a part of the process of change and development, has been shown as a separate component. It too impacts on the core variables via the process of change and development.

Core Variables

Zones: The Peace River Region is an agricultural region with an extensive and mostly undeveloped frontier. As such there are two basic areas within which the region may be classified; the agricultural area which generally corresponds with the Yellow Zone and the frontier area which generally corresponds with the Green Zone. These occur in proportions of approximately one to four respectively.

The Yellow Zone contains almost all of the settlements and most of the population in the region. Its planning problems and issues are related to growth and development, expansion of incorporated areas and loss of agricultural lands. The Green Zone is almost uninhabited and provides the resource base for the region - specifically forestry, oil, gas and various minerals. Its planning problems and issues are related to the use of

MODEL OF THE PEACE RIVER REGION



the frontier for resource extraction, the impact of this activity on the communities in the Yellow Zone, the impact on the natural systems resulting from resource extraction and jurisdictional problems since this zone is administered by a provincial agency. (Energy and Natural Resources).

Districts: These are areas within the Yellow Zone in which various types of settlements and land uses occur. They are distinguished by the types of area they encompass and the types of settlements and land uses found within them. They occur within and may overlap sub-regional boundaries.

There are four types of districts. These are urban, rural transitional, rural and frontier interface.

- The urban district includes all incorporated areas in the region. That is the city, 16 towns and 9 villages. The planning problems and issues within these incorporated areas are similar to the extent that they are urban in nature. Problems and issues include land use and expansion.

- The rural transitional district is the fringe area surrounding the urban district in which expansionary growth and development may occur. The extent of this district is determined by the nature, extent, timing and probability of growth beyond the urban district. The rural transitional sphere is predominantly rural in nature and could include farmsteads and other types of rural development. Transition of this district from rural to urban uses is the planning issue of greatest significance. Policy would be aimed at ensuring that growth will be of a nature that does not conflict with the rural district surrounding it and providing for logical and efficient expansion of the urban district.

- The rural district is the agricultural area beyond the rural transitional district and bounded by the frontier interface district. Agriculture is the dominant land use. Settlements include farmsteads, single and multi-parcel country residential and hamlets*. Growth pressures are generally lower in

*Hamlets - These are included in the rural district rather than the urban district since they are rural in nature and function and therefore an extension of the rural landscape.

this district than in the two previous. Planning problems and issues are related to protection of agricultural land, non-agricultural uses such as industry and resource development and increasing country residential use in the district.

- The frontier interface district creates an edge between the rural district and the frontier or green zone. It may require special policy depending on the type of development likely to occur on the interface and the impact of that development on either side of the interface. Planning problems and issues may be related to the use of the land for forestry versus agriculture.

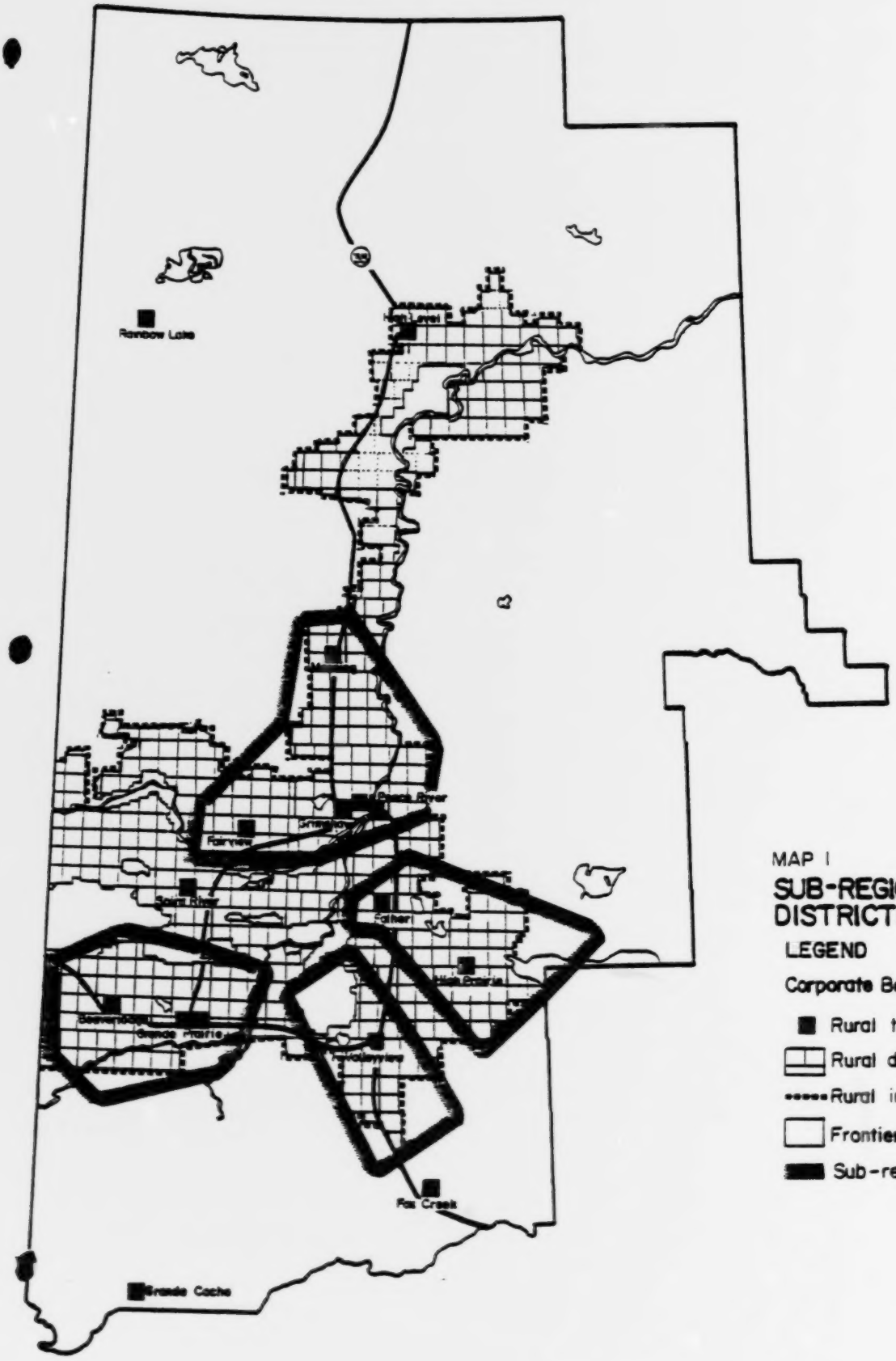
These districts could be used as the framework for policy development. Policy would be designed to address the particular planning issues within the districts.

Sub-regions: Preliminary investigations of economic base linkages indicate that there may be functional sub-regions within the region. These may be sufficiently different to warrant special policy consideration on an individual sub-regional basis. These may also provide a basis for the preferred distribution of future growth and development. Sub-regions are examined more fully in the appendix to this report.

Note: Sub-regions are different than districts. Sub-regions are collections of settlements and areas which have certain interdependencies and linkages; mostly economic. They are a functional unit within the region which is somewhat self-contained although not self-sufficient. They may include districts or parts of districts.

Districts are areas throughout the region having common characteristics. For example, the rural district is the regional agricultural area; the urban district includes all the incorporated municipalities since these are areas of common planning issues and problems. Districts may transcend sub-regional boundaries.

Map 1 illustrates districts and probable sub-regions.



MAP I

SUB-REGIONS AND DISTRICTS

LEGEND

Corporate Boundaries - Urban district

Rural transitional district

Rural district

Rural interface district

Frontier

Sub-region

N

Land Use: This includes all forms and types of land use within the region. The type, combination and intensity of land use is different for each district and the frontier. Land use is a major component which gives an area its identity. Linkages between and commonality among land uses throughout an area may also create a sub-region. Growth, decline and evolution of an area are manifested by changes in land use. Planning problems and issues relative to land use are related to the most desireable distribution of land use, land use conflicts, changes in land use and the extent to which land use impacts on the region.

Area of Special Jurisdiction: These include the Green Zone, Indian Reservations and Metis Colonies. Although the latter two are somewhat self-contained units making their impact on the rest of the region minimal the Green Zone is an area of great potential activity related to resource development which may have significant impacts on the settlements in the Yellow Zone. The Regional Planning Commission's mandate to plan in the region includes a legitimate concern within this provincally administered zone. Since E.N.R. acts as the corporate landowner and is involved in resource management planning whereas the Regional Planning Commission typically concentrates its efforts on regional development planning it may be prudent for the R.P.C. to implement a coorinated/cooperative planning approach via advisory policies pertaining to regional development in the Green Zone.

Indian Reservations fall under the jurisdiction of the federal government via the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. Metis Colonies fall under the jurisdiction of the province and it appears that the Planning Services Division of Municipal Affairs will be responsible for planning. Any policies developed by the R.P.C. should be advisory/cooperative since jurisdiction rests elsewhere.

Transportation System: This is extremely important in such a vast and dispersed region. The existing system links most of the Yellow Zone with the exception of some of the hamlets and outlying areas. Some settlements within the Green Zone are seasonally inaccessible by roads and are dependent on air transportation. The planning issue is one of providing acceptable links to all parts of the region and developing the transportation system to implement an appropriate growth strategy, goals and objectives.

Settlement Types:

There are 10 settlement types in the Peace River Region including homesteads, farmsteads, single parcel country residential, multi-parcel country residential, hamlets, villages, towns, city and Indian Reservations/Metis Colonies.

Each settlement type has its own identity, characteristics, problems and growth pressures. Consequently, each settlement type, with the exception of Indian/Metis Settlements which are beyond the jurisdiction of the commission, may have its own policy requirements.

Although the extent of the relationship remains to be tested, it is suspected that the settlement types form hierarchies in some areas. These settlements provide various levels of service to areas extending beyond their corporate boundaries.

Resource Based Activity:

This may be the key force which will influence the type, extent and location of growth and development in this region. As such it must be taken into consideration when formulating policy. There are four sectors of resource based activities including oil/gas, forestry, mineral extraction and agriculture. Agriculture differs from other resource based activites in that its impacts in terms of new employment opportunities and associated demands are of a smaller magnitude, and less related to the boom and bust cycle.

There are two types of impacts generated by these activities. They are existing and future. Existing impacts are evident in the long standing employment base resulting from agriculture. Agriculture is a dominant force which has shaped the nature and characteristic of many existing settlements in the region. Other resource based activities, particularly oil/gas and forestry have created a new and significant employment base. This has been responsible for a considerable amount of recent regional growth and has altered the nature and characteristic of the region to some extent. Future impacts will result from spinoff demands generated by more resource development. These may change the characteristics of existing settlements and may even be responsible for the creation of new settlements. Existing transportation systems may also be modified to accommodate resource development. Planning issues and problems are related to these impacts.

Urbanization: This is the process where a region tends to become more urbanized as a result of shifts in the regional economic base away from agriculture. The planning problems and issues are related to the change in the nature and characteristics of the region and the demands of the population resulting from urbanization.

Like resource development urbanization may also contribute to the impact on settlement types, the transportation system and to changes in the nature and characteristics of the region. The extent of the urbanization is totally dependent on the rate and magnitude of growth in resource development and on the process of change and development.

The Process of Change and Development

This refers to the process by which growth, development and change occurs in the region. It involves actors, decisions, and influences from the private, public and corporate sectors. It is the most dynamic aspect of the model which critically impacts on every core variable to one degree or another. Although it may, for analytical purposes, be viewed as external to the core variables this process is ubiquitous.

A comprehensive identification of the components and structure of this process is difficult. It may not even be necessary since many of these components are beyond the control of policy appropriate at the regional level The following more obvious components of the process may suffice for the purpose of illustration. They include;

- factors affecting population growth and decline,
- expanding or decreasing employment opportunities,
- change in demand for goods and services,
- economic conditions (internal and external),
- investment decisions,
- changes in technology,
- government composition, goals, objectives and policy (internal and external governments),
- expanding and decreasing development opportunities, and
- others too numerous to mention.

The structure of the components of this process is possibly its most complex feature. Adding to its complexity is the fact that each component within the process has its own sub-processes. Perhaps it is less important to understand the intricacies of the process and more important to accept that it exists and affects the region.

At best, the influence of regional policy would only trim the rough edges of this process. Policy should attempt to respond to this process by clearly indicating the preferred pattern of growth, development and change in the region. This may have the impact of influencing the process to the extent that those regional goals and objectives, whose realization may be affected by this process, have a higher probability of being realized.

Part of the ongoing process of regional planning would be to monitor the process of change and development and determine its impact on the region. The monitoring exercise would establish whether the probable growth trends are unfolding as predicted. If such is not the case this may indicate that there has been a shift within the process of change and development which is manifested by a change in the expected growth trends. If this change is unacceptable regional plan policy may require amendment in order to achieve the desired goals and objectives.

The Process of Regional Planning

This process may also be viewed as external to but critically impacting upon the core variables. It refers to the process of problem/issue identification, goal formulation, policy formulation, monitoring, feedback, review, re-evaluation, modification and re-direction which may be generally referred to as the planning process. It includes the participation of citizens and private or special interest groups. It focuses on local, regional and provincial agencies.

Regional Planning affects the core variables through policy. It attempts to direct the process of change and development so that goals and objectives are realized and concurrently monitors this process to ensure that goals, objectives and policies are still valid in view of modifications in the process of change and development. It addresses the core variables by considering the process of change and development.

4

GROWTH STRATEGY & THE REGIONAL PLAN

4. GROWTH STRATEGY AND THE REGIONAL PLAN

By virtue of Section 46 of the Planning Act regional plans are perceived to be documents which address growth and development issues. In its review of various draft regional plans to date the Alberta Planning Board has stated the need for a clear and explicit growth strategy as the context within which growth and development issues are to be addressed. It appears then that a well-defined and explicit growth strategy must be a critical component of the regional plan.

A growth strategy doesn't necessarily deal exclusively with increasing growth and development. It must also deal with static and declining growth areas. As such it would address the advantages and opportunities available to these areas as well as addressing the impacts and problems associated with rapid growth areas.

The Peace River Region has had and will continue to have rapid growth areas and slower growth areas. Both types of areas have made significant contributions to the overall development of this region. They will be encouraged to continue contributing in a positive fashion. As such, each type of growth area will have a definite function expressed by the growth strategy.

The growth strategy will evolve through the analysis of growth studies. It is anticipated that probable development trends over the next 15 years will be analyzed and tested against economic goals and objectives for the region. This will bring to light any deficiencies in the growth trends which can then be corrected through the growth strategy. It is recommended that the growth strategy not be written in prescriptive language. It should illustrate and encourage the preferred pattern of growth and economic development in the region. It should not restrict growth in any particular area unless the appropriate municipality specifically requests such action.

Many of the factors which cause growth, development and decline are external to the region (see model - changing markets, supply, demand, investment decisions, changes in governments, etcetra). Most of these factors are beyond any significant influence by regional policy. The best that can be done by a regional planning agency is:

- To analyze growth trends and become aware of what is probable in terms of economic development and growth.
- To develop realistic economic goals and objectives.
- To develop a strategy which will influence, regulate and modify growth trends as much as realistically possible in order to satisfy regional goals and objectives.
- To develop policy based on implementing the strategy.

There are two basic methods by which this policy may be implemented. The first is by encouraging municipal governments to use the policy as the basis for their local planning and decision making. The second is by having the Regional Planning Commission actively advise the provincial government on the preferred type and amount of economic develpoment and investment and to co-ordinate provincial initiatives in this region. Both methods will be stressed in the growth strategy.

Some of the considerations which will be included in the analysis of growth studies are as follows:

- Consideration of the economic nature of this region in terms of an appropriate typology (ie., agricultural region in transition). The characteristics of that typology and the way in which these will change or evolve will be examined.

- Identification of rapid, slow and declining growth areas which may require attention (policy) over the next 5, 10 and 15 years. (Identified on a sub-regional basis if appropriate.)

- Identification of land use and land management problems resulting from potential growth and development. (Identified on a sub-regional basis if appropriate.)

- Examination of the present settlement structure in the region and determination of the impact of anticipated growth and development on that settlement structure.

- Identification of alternatives for the distribution of growth and development. Alternatives may range from a centralized to a decentralized distribution. Examples could include:

  (i) Centralized Distribution - majority of growth is concentrated in one or two centres such as Grande Prairie and/or Peace River.

  (ii) Strategic/Satellite Distribution - growth is allocated to a number of strategic or critical centres throughout the region.

  (iii) Corridor Distribution - growth is distributed to communities along a highway corridor.

  (iv) Dispersed Distribution - growth is dispersed throughout the region on a somewhat equalized basis and not intensified in any one area.

The growth strategy will respond to the following economic goal and objectives.

GOAL: The impacts of development in the Peace River Region should be directed toward achieving the greatest possible benefits for the people of the Peace Region, Alberta and Canada.

OBJECTIVES: Indicate a concern for the following.

- Evaluating and responding to present and future development of renewable and non-renewable resources.
- Conservation of the agricultural land base and maintenance and growth of the agriculture industry.
- Encouraging a balanced and diversified economic base.

The growth strategy will express the preferred pattern of growth and development in terms of the four following components.

1. Form of Economic Growth and Development

   - indicates the type of growth and development to be encouraged in the region
   - expressed in terms of economic base sectors
   - in response to the objectives it will consider basic and non-basic sectors of the economy with emphasis on agriculture and resources

2. Distribution of Economic Growth and Development

   - indicates the preferred allocation of growth and development opportunities to be encouraged in the region.
   - examples of distribution could include encouraging equalization of growth throughout the region, encouraging growth in larger municipalities, encouraging growth in smaller municipalities, encouraging growth in some sub-regions but not others.
   - distribution is not intended to restrict growth in any particular area but to encourage growth to particular areas in accordance with a preferred regional pattern.

3. Rate and Level of Economic Growth and Development

   - this examines the speed of growth and the amount of growth.
   - it may be expressed in terms of phasing of growth and future population levels.
   - it considers the amount of growth desireable, how fast this growth should happen, whether parts of the region should grow faster than others and in growth terms where the region should be in 5, 10 and 15 years.

4. Roles and Functions to be Played by Member Municipalities

   - this is extremely important since the implementation of the strategy is dependent upon the co-operation of member municipalities.
   - indicates the preferred roles and functions; that is the roles and functions which the growth strategy encourages. (Municipalities will not be restricted to these roles.)
   - examples might be to encourage smaller municipalities to function as agriculture service centres, to encourage rural areas to continue to function as agriculture areas, to encourage larger municipalities to continue to function as centres for trade and commerce, etcetra.
   - other functions could include transportation/communication centres, accommodation centre, resource service centres, institutional centres, administrative/government centres and dormitory community.
   - functions could be specified on a sub-regional basis if appropriate.

The underlying features of the growth strategy might be based on strengthening of the agricultural base, development of resource potential, developing an efficient transportation system and encouraging urbanization in selected areas.

The actual form, distribution, rate/level of growth and appropriate roles and functions can't be determined until further research has been completed. The preceeding are only examples to illustrate the characteristics of a growth strategy.

5

NATURE & STRUCTURE OF POLICY

5. NATURE AND STRUCTURE OF POLICY

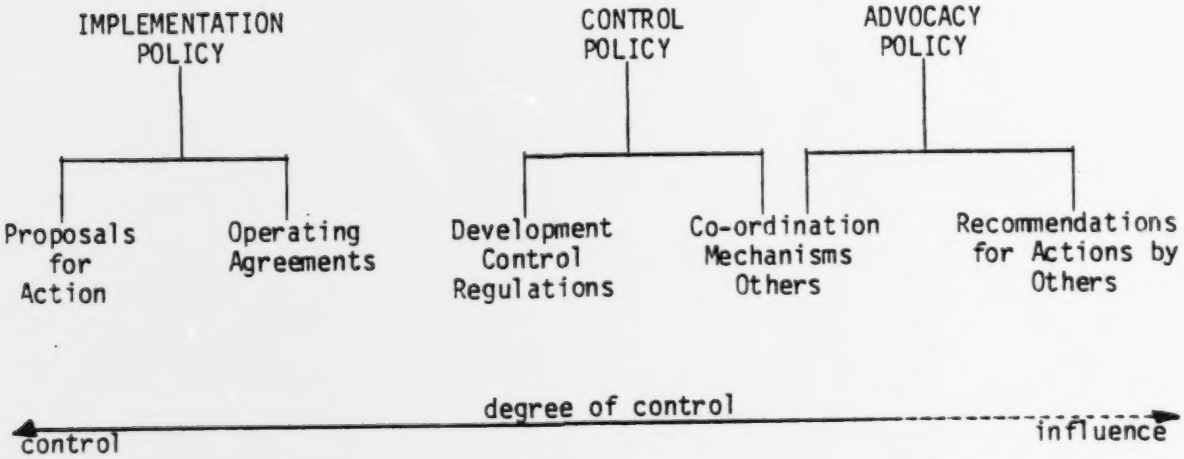
The Alberta Planning Board has stated that policy in regional plans must be structured such that it clearly relates to problems, issues, goals and objectives. In effect policy must address a particular objective(s), which addresses a particular goal which is a response to a problem or issue. This traditional sequential relationship is not clear in many of the regional plans reviewed so far by the Alberta Planning Board.

When formulating policy for the Peace River Regional Plan it must be written and placed such that this structure is particularly evident. If it is decided that it is undesireable to list appropriate goals and objectives in the chapters of each functional policy area then the relationship could be indicated by referencing the policies to the appropriate goals and objectives in footnotes, by referring to the appropriate goals and objectives in the introduction to each functional policy area or a combination of both.

(i) The Characteristics of Policy - A Review of Policy Types

There are three basic types of policy as illustrated on the following diagram. These are implementation, control and advocacy policy.

DIAGRAM 3: ILLUSTRATION OF POLICY HIERARCHY*



*Based on, "Guidelines for Regional Plan Review", Alberta Planning Board; January 29, 1980.

Implementation policy: These are action-oriented policies concerned with matters within the jurisdiction of the regional planning commission. They are implemented by proposals for action or by operating agreements between two or more agencies which will have the effect of fulfilling the policy.

EXAMPLE:

Implementation Policy:	The Commission wishes to protect natural environmental features occurring within subdivisions proposed in the urban and rural transitional spheres of the planning area.
Proposals for Action:	The Commission proposes to establish a subdivision design service composed of Commission staff, who will provide information and guidelines whereby environmental features occuring within proposed subdivision could be incorporated into the subdivision design.
Operating Agreement:	Local authorities are requested to encourage subdivision applicants to submit concept draft plans to the Commission Offices prior to application for subdivision approval.

NOTE: This set of policy relates to Goal C and the second objective under Goal C.

Control policy: These can be regulatory in nature and provide the framework for development control instuments. They may also specify coordinating arrangements in situations where other agencies are responsible for administering regulations which control land use and development in the region (ie., green zone, highway standards etc.)

EXAMPLE:

Control Policy:	High quality agricultural land in the rural transitional and rural districts shall be kept in agricultural production.
Development Control Regulations:	Subdivision of land for non-agricultural purposes shall not be permitted on land of CL1 class 2 or 3 within the rural transitional and rural districts.

NOTE: This policy relates to Goal A and the second objective under that goal.

Control Policy: Development of new settlements within the Green Zone should only occur in areas which are best suited for development.

Coordination Mechanism: The Commission wishes to undertake research in conjunction with the Department of Energy and Natural Resources to determine optimum locations for new settlements within the Green Zone.

NOTE: This policy relates to Goal F and a number of related policies.

Advocacy Policy: These deals with land use and development matters that are the direct responsibility of another agency. They are given effect through coordination mechanisms and/or recommendations for action by other agencies.

EXAMPLE:

Advocacy Policy: The Commission will encourage Alberta Transportation to coordinate its planning in accordance with the Commission's policies on residential and industrial development.

Coordination Mechanism: The Commission will offers the fullest cooperation of its staff in the preparation of a Regional Transportation Plan.

Recommendations for Action by Others: The Commission wishes to recommend to Alberta Transportation that a comprehensive regional transportation plan be prepared to cover all aspects of the development of the transportation network and that development of the network be phased in accordance with the growth strategy contained in the Regional Plan.

NOTE: This policy relates to Goal B and the two associated objectives.

(ii) Policy Language

Policy language may be prescriptive, which requires mandatory compliance and is typified by auxiliary verbs such as shall and will. It may be suggestive where the policy is written as a guideline thereby making compliance non-compulsory and is typified by the use of the word should. It is reflective where the policy is written to mirror, endorse, explain or support the policy of another agency.

Prescriptive language should be used only when absolutely critical for the implementation of a goal or objective and in any case only when dealing with areas of clearly regional responsibility or interest.

Suggestive language is appropriate when attempting to implement regionally desireable standards or conditions in policy areas which are clearly the responsibility and jurisdiction of authorities other than the R.P.C. Reflective language could infer mandatory compliance or otherwise. However, if it infers mandatory compliance the policy must not appear to give the R.P.C. the authority for enforcement of a policy which is beyond its jurisdiction. Rather, it should reflect the fact that the R.P.C. endorses mandatory compliance to the policy/regulation as administered by another agency.

(iii) Structured Policy and the Test Matrix

In formulating policy the writer should be aware of the components of the model which the policy is addressing or affecting, be able to rationalize the legality of the policy by specifying the section of the Act or Subdivision Regulations to which the policy applies, be able to measure goal achievement by demonstrating those goals and objectives addressed by policy, be able to illustrate the role played by the Regional Planning Commission and other agencies involved in implementing or affected by policy and be able to demonstrate the nature of policy in terms of its type and language.

A matrix has been designed to test all of the preceeding factors. Every proposed policy statement may be tested by completing the matrix. In so doing the comprehensiveness of policy is tested, policy deficiencies may be identified, the impact of policy on the model is illustrated and the relationship of policy to goals and objectives is outlined which thereby demonstrates the structure of policy. (Refer to Appendix for Matrix.)

6

CONTENTS & COMPONENTS OF THE REGIONAL PLAN DOCUMENT

6. CONTENTS AND COMPONENTS OF THE REGIONAL PLAN DOCUMENT

The following is an outline of the possible contents of the regional plan. It is based on an analysis of regional plans both inside and outside the province, considers the directions given in "Guideline for Regional Plan Review" and reflects the positions taken in this paper.

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

Section 1: Opening Remarks

1. Foreward - General statement which introduces the planning area and the regional plan.

2. Purpose - Reasons for a regional plan and its intended functions.

3. Legislative Base - Summary of the provisions of the Planning Act relative to regional plans particularly the plan as a legal document and the requirement for conformity of lower order planning documents.

4. Definitions - Reference to definitions or a glossary of terms. This is placed near the end of the document and is part of the plan as opposed to being an appendix. Definitions should, if possible, be consistent with the Planning Act and with those used in General Municipal Plans and Land Use By-laws approved thus far.

5. Scope of the Plan - The plan addresses key issues in the region, provides a framework for local planning and growth and development and considers a range of policy areas. It includes a timeframe for the plan.

6. How the Plan was prepared - This indicates the process undertaken in the preparation of this document ie), goal generation/ratification, strategy development, policy formulation etcetra.

7. Approach taken in this plan - This describes the plan as a guide and framework for planning at the local level. It explains the use of prescriptive and suggetive policies. It considers the potential dichotomy between local autonomy and regional issues. The plan has evolved from Patterns for the Future (preliminary regional plan 1976) and will be used as a foundation on which to build future policy through monitoring, review and amendment.

8. Uses of the Plan - Who uses it and how? It should be used as the basis for preparing statutory plans and for taking growth and development decisions.

   Explains the relevance of this document to the individual or the farmer in the field.

9. Review and Amendment of the Plan - Brief statement of monitoring and review which explains why this is needed and how it will be done. The plan is intended to be responsive to changing conditions and therefore has contingencies built into it designed to respond to changes. Amendments are intended to be used as a means of updating policy and dealing with plan non-conformity. The amendment process is expedited by the Peace River Regional Planning Commission.

(It is anticipated that one or two paragraphs will be sufficient for each of the preceding topics. The final draft with contain a section on Commission membership and staff composition.)

Section 2: The Peace River Regional Planning Area

1. Description of the Peace River Region
   - boundaries
   - size
   - geography and physical features
   - introduction to the environmental components and their particular importance to this region
   - Peace River system (watersheds, etc.)
   - range of activities in the region (rural/agriculture - resource frontier)
   - settlements structure in the region
   - uniques features of the region
   - population distribution and characteristics - compared with the Province; rate of change date; comparisons with other regions.
   - map or graphics illustrating the region in a provincial context

2. The Planning Model of the Region
   - This section is intended to provide a brief explanation of the region in a simplified concept form. The purpose is to illustrate that the region is a collection of interacting components which is affected by external decisions and factors. It should be noted that the model was used as a tool to understanding the region for more effective policy formulation.
   - Description of the model, its components and the relationship among the components.
   - A diagram of the model which should be less detailed than diagram 2.
   - A map of the region with the sub-regions and districts designated.
   - The information in this section is introductory only. Detailed information could be appended or be included in a separate explanatory report.

PART TWO: STRATEGIC ORIENTATION OF THE PLAN

Section 1: Problems and Issues in the Peace River Region

- This should be an overview of the concerns and issues relevant to this region. It should include a statement recognizing the potential for future problems and illustrate how the planning process is designed to respond to this, acknowledge that all problems and issues may not have been ideitifed and that goals, objectives and policies may change over time as new problems and issues are identified.

Section 2: Goals

Introduction:

- The goals represent the aspirations of the citizens of the Peace River Region and the problem areas requiring attention based on the identified concerns and issues. Policy is designed to implement goals. The goals may change over time.

Format (for each category or functional policy area)

1. Statement of intentions or aspirations which are a response to concerns and issues.

2. Specific goals with explanatory statements. (Objectives are to be detailed in the functional policy areas and cross-referenced to goals.)

Section 3: Strategy and Policy Thrust

- Introduction explaining the method by which the goals are addressed in the plan and how the approach and policies are geared to responding to goals. This section should include a listing of the key policy topic areas which thereby introduces and leads into the rest of the plan.

PART THREE: STRATEGY FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Section 1: Regional Trends

- This will include an overview of growth and development from the past and over the next 15 years based on the growth studies currently underway. Some graphics could be used to explain these trends.

- An introductory statement will also be included which describes the need for a strategy, how it was determined and a recognition of growth as being decreasing, static and/or increasing.

Section 2: Growth Strategy

- Describe and illustrate.
- Include policy which expresses the preferred form, distribution and rate/level of regional growth and explains the roles and functions of member municipalities and sub-regions.
- Include a concept plan which illustrates the preferred growth directions. This demonstrates the direction in which growth is to be encouraged and discouraged as opposed to permitted and prohibited.
- Strategy should include policies to deal with areas of rapid growth and static or declining growth. Should demonstrate the opportunities available to non-growth areas.
- If appropriate the policies could express an industrial development strategy (ie., secondary, tertiary, manufacturing, processing, etc.) although policies may likely concentrate on expansion of agricultural opportunities and resource development.
- The growth strategy must be responsive to changes in the anticipated development trend. Therefore it should have corrective contingencies built into it.
- Technical justification for the strategy should be included here. (This should be apparent in section one but may require further elaboration in this section.)

PART FOUR: POLICY FOR THE PEACE RIVER REGION

The suggested format for addressing policy in the regional plan is to divide policy into chapters based on functional policy areas such as resource development, environment land policy etcetra. Within the functional policy area the policy statements could be designed to apply to the region as a whole, the subregions, districts as a whole or districts within sub-regions or to particular components depending on what is required to acheive the appropriate goals and objectives. The following outline is based on this format.

Common to each policy chapter could be:

- An introductory background statement which describes the policy area being considered and refers to the concerns/issues being addressed.

- A statement of objective(s) cross-referenced to the appropriate goals. (Refer to Regional Plan Goals and Objectives in Appendix.)

- A statement which demonstrates what the policies are trying to achieve relative to the goals and objectives being addressed. This is intended to indicate policy direction and may include statements pertaining to future trends relative to the functional policy area.

- A statement of technical justification which supports the policies in general and the major assumptions on which they are based. This could include empirical data or some form of quantitative evidence. Perhaps references to background studies are appropriate.

- A quantitative or qualitative statement with respect to monitoring.

The order of the following policy chapters are not necessarily in the most advantageous sequence nor are the range of policy topics within each chapter complete. It is proposed that regional planning staff would be assigned appropriate policy chapters and be responsible for developing a comprehensive policy outline and formulating policy. Policy would be formulated with regard for the planning model and could be tested on the matrix if so desired.

CHAPTER 1: AGRICULTURAL LAND POLICY

- Maintaining a Renewable Resource -

1. Background: - This policy is concerned with the use of good agricultural land and with the impact of development, growth and urbanization on agriculture as a land use and agriculture as a economic base of the region. Policy is based on the premise that agriculture is a prime resource of this region. Whereas oil/gas development, forestry, etc. may bring prosperity to the region and from this may evolve long term economic benefits, agriculture already provides a type of long term economic benefit in terms of an established and productive economic base.

2. Objectives: - This policy addresses Goal A, Objective 2 and Goal F, Objective 6.

3. Policy Direction: - This policy attempts to provide for the preservation and protection of good agricultural land. It seeks to strike a balance between growth and development requirements and maintenance and development of the agricultural resource. It also seeks to provide guidance on how to resolve conflicts when these occur.

Fundamental to policy is the position that the right to develop land as one wishes does not necessarily run with the ownership of the land. Nor is the regulation of land use a violation of individual rights. In fact the responsibility to regulate land use is conferred by the Planning Act. The objective of the Regional Planning Commission should be to promote that land use which benefits the region as a whole.

Two basic aspects of agricultural land policy is the formulation of criteria to determine agricultural capability and the "priorities" approach to development of agricultural land. For example, if rural industrial development is a high priority on a regional or sub-regional basis then it might be allowed on some Class 3 land and poorer depending upon location. Whereas, country residential, which is a lower priority, might be allowed on Class 4 and poorer. (Note these are examples only and don't indicate the actual priorities.)

Another area of concentration is the regulation of subdivision in the rural area and the application and interpretations of the Subdivision Regulations to be taken by the subdivision approving authority. This tends to be an implementation measure which is dealt with in part five.

4. Technical Justification: - Comments on the amount and location of agricultural land in the region.

5. Monitoring statement.

Appropriate Policy Topics

1. Method to be used in determining good agricultural land.

2. Subdivision and development policy for agricultural land. (See Directions for subdivision of land in Part Five - Implementation.) Includes criteria, regulations, interpretations, application, etc.

3. Non-agricultural use in the rural, rural transitional and frontier interface districts. (Priorities, etc.)

4. Policy for dealing with land use conflicts.

CHAPTER 2: RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- Providing for Resource Extraction -

1. Background: - This policy refers to oil/gas, minerals and forestry resources particularly as these affect the frontier (Green Zone). It also concentrates on the associated settlement structure required to service resource development.

   It is acknowledged that resource activity in the Green Zone is beyond the regulatory authority of the commission. However, because there are significant growth and develpoment impacts to the region, both positive and negative, resulting from this activity, the commission should work with the province to ensure that regional concerns are accommodated. This is critical since resource development is likely to be the most important short term growth factor in the region.

2. Objectives: - Addresses Goal A.

3. Policy - The policy seeks to achieve a balance between the rate of resource exploitation and the ability of the region to accommodate the associated growth in accordance with the growth strategy. It attempts to create the situation or condition where the province plans and directs resource exploitation in such a way that the associated demands resulting from the importation of labour and population growth can be accommodated in the context of the regional growth strategy. It recognizes that a coordinated approach with the province to planning for resource exploitation is the most effective method of planning for the associated growth and development pressures.

4. Technical Justification: - Demonstration of the probable extent of resource exploitation over the next 15 years and the associated land demands.

5. Monitoring Statement.

Appropriate Policy Topics

1. Development of a coordinated approach with the province to the staging of resource exploitation.

2. Policies to deal with the demands resulting from growth and development in this sector including a settlement policy for the frontier (cross-referenced with general settlement policy).

3. Policies regarding further research/information into resource development potential.

4. Reclamation policies including measures to encourage that land cleared by forestry activity be reforested or alternatively made available for agricultural production if it is of suitable quality and location.

5. Policies concerned with environmental protection although these could be considered under environmental policy.

6. Policies concentrating on development of resources in accordance with the regional growth strategy.

7. Policies concentrating on extending the life of non-renewable resources and other energy conservation measures.

NOTE: Resource development is a type of economic development. Other aspects of economic development include industrial development (processing, secondary industries, etc.) and the impact of industrialization. Policies dealing with this could be considered in a separate section or incorported into the growth strategy (ie., form of regional "economic" growth).

CHAPTER 3: ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

- Protecting the Environmental Base -

1. Background:

- The environmental system is complex, multi-faceted and extensive. It is a sensitive and closed system which can support and regenerate itself if left undisturbed. There are regional benefits in having portions of the system undisturbed and in having all of the system managed well.

  Since it is unrealistic to assume that large portions of the system will remain undisturbed policy must address the problem of protecting this environmental base while providing for development.

  The environment is extra sensitive in this region due to erodible soils and sever climate. Therefore, any impact becomes more sever since the regenerative process takes longer.

2. Objectives:

- Addresses Goals C and D.

3. Policy Directions:

- Policy accepts that there will be development which impacts on the environmental system. However, development can be managed and directed in such a way that the impact is minimized. Policy stresses this least impact approach. Policy further stresses that there are areas which may accommodate development and areas which are strictly for conservation.

4. Technical Justification: - Demonstration of the desireability of protecting the environmental land base. It will concentrate on the rationale for exerting control as reflected by policy and the need to strike a balance or harmony between conservation and development.

5. Monitoring Statement.

Appropriate Policy Topics

1. Environmentally Sensitive Areas, hazard land, river valley and lakes policy.

2. Waste disposal policy (coordinated with physical infrastructure policy).

3. Forestry/woodlands policy (coordinated with resources policy).

4. Environmental aspects of agriculture, housing, transportation, industrial/ commercial, resource development, energy transmission and dams/impoundment policy.

5. Environmental policy for urban areas.

6. Wetlands, erosion/sedimentation control, air/water quality and groundwater management policy.

7. P.R.R.P.C. roles in provincial environmental planning/management, decision making.

8. Policy which encourages co-operative research with province to develop ways of minimizing environmental impacts.

9. Wildlife habitat protection policy.

CHAPTER 4: OPEN SPACE, RECREATION AND PARK SYSTEM

- Developing a Regional Resource -

1. Background: - The abundance and variety of natural areas throughout the region provides the opportunity for the development of a unique and diverse open space system. The natural area is viewed as a resource which ought to be developed and managed. That is, it should be open to man use although managed so that it is protected.

   This resource may be sufficiently unique to become a contributor to the regional economic base.

2. Objectives: - Addresses Goal G in a development or man-use oriented fashion.

3. Policy Orientation: - Policy includes measures to identify the resource and its potential for development. It recognizes that there are areas which ought to be protected from any type of development and assumes that there should be different levels of use for different levels of open space. The policy is designed to encourage the creation of a fully developed open space, recreational and park system.

4. Technical Justification: - Indication of the extent of the resource coupled with the desireability of developing it.

5. Monitoring Statement.

Appropriate Policy Topics

1. Guidelines for parks system within the urban district (perhaps related to General Land Use Categories).

2. Locations for regional parks, campgrounds, wilderness areas, etcetra and/or criteria for locations.

3. Creation and promotion of a tourist based open space industry.

4. Coordination and joint planning mechanisms with various provincial agencies.

Comment: This chapter could be combined with the chapter on environment. However, the orientation in this chapter is to develop whereas the former is to conserve. These are different targets which are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

CHAPTER 5: SETTLEMENT POLICY

- Establishing a Preferred Pattern of Settlements -

1. Background: - This policy applies to the expansion of existing communities and to the creation of new communities in the districts and the frontier. It addresses a growth and development issue which is resolved in the context of a growth strategy.

2. Objectives: - Partially addresses Goal E and its objectives and Goal F, objectives 2, 4 and 6.

3. Policy Directions: - This policy attempts to achieve a distribution and variety of settlements which meet the needs of an agricultural region in transition and services the resource frontier. It is based on encouraging a hierarchy of settlements on a sub-regional basis, which provides the greatest possible range of services, opportunities and living environments. It attempts to achieve an organization of communities which function to the mutual benefit of the region and sub-region.

   This policy encourages new development to locate within specially designated areas, within existing hamlets and within the expansion areas of villages, towns and the city. It discourages scattered, inefficient development.

4. Technical Justification: - Reference to the growth strategy, anticipated future growth levels, and the need for various types and sizes of settlements to service the region.

5. Monitoring Statement.

Appropriate Policy Topics

1. Establishment of sub-regional structure and preferred settlement pattern including designation of existing communities. Elaboration of roles/functions appropriate to member municipalities.

2. Criteria for expansion of existing settlements (villages, towns, city) and associated annexation policy.

3. Hamlet policy.

4. New settlement policy particularly as it relates to the frontier. This would include criteria for establishing new towns and policy which commits the Regional Planning Commission to undertake research, in conjunction with the province, into the need for and proper locations of new towns.

5. Possibly a rural-industrial policy although this might be more appropriately considered under agricultural land policy.

6. Country residential policy. This too might be more appropriate under agricultural land policy.

CHAPTER 6: LAND USE POLICY

- Guidelines for Physical Development -

1. Background: - This policy is formulated in conjunction with settlement policy. It assumes that cities, towns, villages, etc. are different from one another, that each has its own roles and functions and that the types and combinations of land use are critical to the role and function of the settlement. Land uses within communities also reinforce the pattern of settlements within a sub-region which thereby reinforces the sub-regional structure of the region.

   Land uses classes are intended to be as general as possible to allow maximum flexibility for land use regulation at the local level.

2. Objectives: - This policy addresses Goal F particularly objectives 1, 3 and 5 and to some extent the high quality of life inferred by Goal E.

3. Policy Direction: - This policy is intended to be used as a guideline. As such the land use classes represent preferred land uses which may be incorporated into General Municipal Plans and Land Use By-laws although this is not mandatory.

   This policy attempts to encourage a preferred distribution of land uses within various types of municipalities.

   Rural areas are treated differently from urban areas since their roles and functions are different.

   Land use categories are divided into general land use categories which are comprehensive (ie., industry) and these are further classified into specific land use types (ie., light industry, heavy industry, processing, manufacturing, etc.). These are allocated to settlement types such as hamlets, villages, towns and cities. Or they could be allocated according to function of the settlement. For example, regional centre, sub-regional centre, agricultural service centre, frontier service centre, dormitory community, etcetra.

4. Technical Justification: - This could include a demonstration of the need for and benefit of a sub-regional structure and the importance of the variety of settlement types to that structure. Reference to the growth strategy is important here.

5. Monitoring Statement.

Appropriate Policy Topics

1. General land use categories appropriate for cities, towns, etc. or appropriate to a regional centre, sub-regional centre, etc. (It may be appropriate to recommend a larger range of land use categories for lower order settlements in frontier sub-regions since these have to provide a wider range of essential services to a greatly dispersed population.)

2. General land use categories for new settlements in the frontier.

3. Specific or descriptive uses within the general categories.

4. Policy regarding the resolution of land use conflicts.

5. Policy regarding the use and disposition of reserve lands.

6. Perhaps a core areas policy. (Type and condition of the core is essential to the health and identity of a settlement.)

CHAPTER 7: HOUSING POLICY

- Toward a Maximum Range and Diversity of Housing Opportunities -

1. Background: - One aspect of "quality of life" is a wide range of housing types, styles, densities and prices. This issue is one of regional concern which can be implemented at the local level. Therefore the regional plan approach is one of demonstrating alternative ways this "quality of life" might be achieved.

2. Objectives: - Related to Goal E.

3. Policy: - Policy stresses a committment to future research which could assist local authorities in generating this quality of life.

   The commission could function as a "lobby" for various types of assistance programs to bring about a variety of housing opportunities.

4. Technical Justification: - This could indicate future population growth and the subsequent demand for various housing opportunities. It could also relate to growth strategy and the fact that appropriate ranges of housing opportunities within different settlement types is also a characteristic of the settlement hierarchy.

5. Monitoring Statement.

Appropriate Policy Topics

1. Investigation into landbanking on a regional scale.
2. Locally administered subsidized housing.
3. Architectural Review Committees.
4. Recommendation of possible funding programs to the province.
5. Research into alternative housing opportunities.
6. Research into regional housing problems and solutions.
7. Housing design and energy conservation.

Comment: Considerations relevant to regional housing policy could be included in chapters 5 and/or 6. It is included in this outline as a separate chapter because it is an important aspect of the growth and development process which possibly deserves individual attention. Also, the Alberta Planning Board suggests that housing is an appropriate "area" of consideration.

CHAPTER 8: TRANSPORTATION

- Regional and Sub-regional Linkages -

1. Background: - Transportation is critical to the economic and social well being of such a vast and dispersed region. Transportation in this region has to be multi-modal including road, rail and air. This policy addresses the problem of providing safe and efficient transportation which services the relatively accessible Yellow Zone and the relatively inaccessible Green Zone.

2. Objectives: - Addresses Goal B.

3. Policy - This policy attempts to indicate those regional transportation improvements required in the short and long term. It recommends the development of the transportation system in such a way that the sub-regions are linked as well as providing good inter-regional linkages. Development of the transportation system should be phased and directed in accordance with the growth strategy. Transportation linkages within and between the agricultural and frontier areas should be designed with a sensitivity for the environmental system. This policy stresses joint planning with the Province.

4. Technical Justification: - Description of future transportation requirements based on the results of the growth studies.

5. Monitoring Statement.

Appropriate Policy Topics

1. Integration of transportation systems with other land uses both on a regional and local scale.

2. Noise problems, air pollution, safety hazards.

3. Targets for investment in the transportation system.

4. Coordinated planning measures with Alberta Transportation.

5. Criteria for development along highways.

6. Transportation system and the growth strategy.

7. Sub-regional transportation priorities.

8. Opportunities for energy conservation.

CHAPTER 9: PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY TRANSMISSION

- Essential Services in a Dispersed Region -

1. Background: - This policy is concerned with energy networks (power lines and pipelines and other associated facilities) and public utilities (water supply, sewage treatment, storm water runoff and solid waste disposal). The objective is to achieve a high level of safe and efficient service which is sensitive to the environment.

2. Objectives: - This policy implicitly addresses various goals.

3. Policy Directions: - This policy attempts to achieve a safe and environmentally sound system by recommending preferred methods of providing for and locating required facilities.

It concentrates on a cooperative approach to planning and funding physical infrastructures. If the region's energy resources are developed there will be pressure to develop energy transmission networks therefore policy is oriented to prevent land use conflicts.

4. Technical Justification: - Policies recognizes current jurisdiction as the means to responding to regional problems and issues. Policies advise on ways and means of mitigating existing and potential problems.

5. Monitoring Statement.

Appropriate Policy Areas

1. Protection of the natural environment.

2. Reduction of conflicts among land uses.

3. Concept of energy transmission corridors.

4. Planning and coordination with Alberta Environment and Energy and Natural Resources.

5. Formulating guidelines for minimum servicing standards for each settlement type.

6. Recommending locations and standards for regional solid waste disposal sites, etc.

7. Phasing of new infrastructure in accordance with the growth strategy.

Comments: It may be appropriate to combine this chapter with transportation since both areas are concerned with the provision of hard services.

CHAPTER 10: REGIONAL SERVICES

- Human Services in a Dispersed Region -

1. Background: - This policy is concerned with social services, health services, hospitals and education. It recognizes that the regional population is concentrated in some parts of the region and greatly dispersed in others. It further recognizes that various agencies are responsible for administering various programs aimed at providing these services. The problem addressed by policy is the method of service delivery in such a dispersed and vast region.

2. Objectives: - Does not address any particular goal although services are an aspect of quality of life as provided for in Goal E.

3. Policy Orientation: - Policy attempts to identify the need for services on a sub-regional basis if appropriate. It recommends ways and means these services might be provided and stresses a coordinated planning approach with agencies responsible for providing services.

There are two aspects to the servicing problem. One is the delivery of hard services such as hospitals, schools, etc. Deficiencies can be easily measured. Provision of services can be on a sub-regional basis with the pattern of settlements serving as a basis for service delivery. Mobile services may be more useful in the frontier areas. The second aspect

relates to welfare, crime, poverty and other measures of social wellbeing. The problem in this case is to generate policy which increases the level of social well-being by alleviating social problems.

4. Technical Justification: - Expression of the needs and demands for services.

5. Monitoring Statement.

Appropriate Policy Topics

1. Coordination with various agencies to determine types and levels of services required, critical locations and alternative ways and means of providing the services.

2. Addressing the current provincial policy of decentralizing services.

3. Investment targets for provincial consideration.

CHAPTER 11: PLANNING FRAMEWORK

- Making Planning More Visible -

1. Background: - This policy is concerned with making the process of regional planning more visible, accessible and understandable. It addresses the "process of regional planning" component of the model by recommending measures for explaining the planning process, stimulating citizen participation and understanding through education and encouraging regional and local authorities to take decisions in the context of a planning framework.

2. Objectives: - Addresses Goal G.

3. Policy Orientation: - Policy attempts to clarify/explain statutory processes and to expedite processes such that local and regional needs are satisfied.

4. Technical Justification: - Based on the need to alleviate confusion about regional planning, to make the process more visible and to encourage more rational, consistent decision taking.

5. Monitoring Statement.

Appropriate Policy Topics

1. Educational/Outreach programs to make residents and decision takers aware of the planning system.

2. Mechanisms to encourage local authorities to adopt statutory plans and Land Use By-laws which conform to the Regional Plan (explanation of the planning hierarchy).

3. Investigating alternative means of encouraging citizen involvement at appropriate phases of the planning processes.

4. Clarifying the subdivision process and other statutory processes. (Perhaps in appendix to plan).

Comment: Goal H which is concerned with cooperation and coordination of planning activities does not have a separate policy chapter assigned to it. Coordination and cooperation of planning activities is intended to be a part of every policy area where this activity is appropriate. This goal is also reflected in the implementation mechanisms. (Policies which prescribe joint planning between or among local authorities and coordinated planning or research efforts between the R.P.C. and provincial departments are examples of policies which address goal H). "Action" policies which are related to objectives tend to be useful for implementation and as such respond to Goal H.

PART FIVE: IMPLEMENTATION - PROCESSES AND MECHANISMS

It is difficult to be specific about implementation techniques relative to the policies of the Peace River Regional Plan since the majority of these have not been formulated to date. Many of the policies themselves will imply the methods of implementation particularly those prescribing coordinated planning and research efforts. Other methods of implementation may become obvious as policies are formulated. For the time being there are a number of topic areas which merit consideration. These would likely form the crux of the implementation section of the regional plan.

1. Plan Adoption Process - public participation in review of document, serving notice etc.

2. Interpretation of Policies - process established to deal with disputes arising from the interpretation of the meaning or intent of policies and the boundaries of policy areas.
   - R.P.C. will be the authority which makes the interpretation.

3. Amendments to the Regional Plan - the required process for amendment could be noted in general terms with reference to a specific or more detailed process (in accordance with Planning Act) included in appendices.

4. Regional Plan as the Primary Planning Document - by virtue of section 53 all other documents must conform.
   - statement which illustrates dominant position of the Regional Plan.

5. Framework for Hierarchy of Planning Documents - R.P.C. encourages the adoption of General Municipal Plans and Land Use By-laws and will recommend the undertaking of area structure plans, area redevelopment plans and replottng schemes wherever appropriate.
   - R.P.C. willing to provide planning services on a consulting basis to create G.M.P.'s and L.U.B.'s; at the very least to review these documents.

6. Directions for Subdivision of Land - outline the responsibilities of the Subdivision and Development Committee.
   - specify criteria or conditions under which applications may be approved or must be refused.
   - specify criteria or conditions under which the subdivision committee may recommend waivers.
   - specify criteria for use of and limits to discretionary judgement.
   - outline the subdivision application and review process (a detailed description might be appended to the Regional Plan).
   - interpretations to be taken relative to the Subdivision Regulation.

7. Cooperative or Coordinated Efforts - between agencies, RPC, municipalities, etc.

8. Role Definition - specify the roles of all agencies involved in implementing policies. (This may be more appropriate in the introduction to the plan.)

9. Special Processes or Actions - may include a variety of techniques ie., commission offers its expertise to local authorities to assist in the review of complex development proposals or offers advise on any growth or development matter including annexation or expansion proposals; use of committees for dealing with particular policy areas; public participation involvement including information programs which could include the general public, special interest groups etcetra.

10. Sub-regional associations - as a means of identifying and dealing with planning issues and problems.

PART SIX: MONITORING AND REVIEW

This section, along with implementation, is critical as far as the Alberta Planning Board is concerned. The draft regional plans reviewed thus far have not satisfied the expectations of the Board with respect to monitoring and review. Some plans deal with one or the other although neither in sufficient detail. Others have perceived monitoring and review as similar activities.

For the purpose of the Peace River Regional Plan monitoring and review should be viewed as separate activities. Although they are related they are independent operations.

Monitoring refers to the activity of testing whether targets, specified or implied by policy, are being reached within the appropriate time frames. It tends to be a continual process with each monitoring exercise applying to a specific policy or group of policies. It also refers to the activity of testing whether problems, conditions, etc. have changed since the fomulation of policy.

Review refers to the activity of evaluating the regional plan. It takes a wholistic approach and examines whether the goals and objectives and consequently the policies are still valid at a particular point in the life of the plan. The process is periodic. It can be done annually, bi-annually, every five years, every ten years etcetra. If a review is undertaken frequently it may be less extensive than a longer term review.

Monitoring on a continual basis may identify the need for review. Review may generate amendments to or a total rewrite of the plan.

This part of the Peace River Regional Plan should have an introductory statement outlining the difference between monitoring and review and demonstrating the relationship between these two operations. This would be followed by specific proposals for monitoring and review.

A responsive monitoring system involves a feedback and/or information retreival mechanism which probably requires the cooperation of agencies other than the R.P.C. to make it effective. In most cases this cooperation must be obtained through persuasion and encouragement. There are also some monitoring exercises which involve data gathering or field testing which can be undertaken exclusively and independently. There should be coningencies built into the plan policies which permit minor shifting of directions or orientations in policy implementation in response to monitoring information without requiring a formal amendment.

Some techniques which could be used in the Peace River Regional Plan include;

1. Monitoring of population growth, subdivision, municipal expansions and new settlement creation to judge if these generally fit the pattern specified by the growth strategy.

2. Monitoring of subdivision applications to determine the rate of consumption of agricultural land thereby determining whether the policies are protecting the agricultural resource.

3. Monitoring of political decisions made by the R.P.C., its committees and local authorities to determine whether they are made in the context of the prescribed planning framework. (This could also indicate whether the planning framework is realistic, too rigid or too flexible.)

4. Surveys to test whether information programs (ie., citizen awareness) regarding planning in the region are making the planning process more visible, understandable and accessible.

5. Monitoring of statutory plans and land use by-laws to determine whether land use policies are being incorporated into these documents. (The intent is to test whether the policies serve the needs of the local authorities as opposed to whether they are being incorporated into the document. Although, testing the frequency of incorporation into the documents may well indicate acceptability of the policies or otherwise).

One by-product of a continuous monitoring system could be an annual report which would indicate the effectiveness of the policies and recommend minor shifts in policy implementation, whether amendments to the plan should be executed and/or whether a review of the plan is appropriate. If so, it could also recommend a selective review or an extensive review. I suspect it will be sufficient for the regional plan to indicate the types of monitoring activities to be undertaken as opposed to detailing specific work programmes over a particular time period.

In the case of reviews it may be sufficient to state that these will be undertaken in accordance with the needs demonstrated by the monitoring process. The plan should specify the type of review which might be undertaken on an annual, bi-annual, five year or ten year basis. That is, in accordance with the needs demonstrated by the monitoring process. A longer term review should be more comprehensive than a shorter term "course-correcting" review. It may be desireable to recommend a mandatory long term review period which is undertaken automatically in spite of any recommendations generated by the monitoring system.

CONCLUDING NOTE

The Board has requested that the following types of documents be forwarded with the Regional Plan as support material.

1.	Technical Background Report(s)	- Process of Plan development and analysis and conclusions referenced to the policy sections in the regional plan.
2.	Public Consultation Report	- This must demonstrate that the requirements of the Act have been met. It should include a summary of public and municipal submissions, presentations, and objections to the plan with indications of dispositions.
3.	Annual Monitoring Report	- This should demonstrate changing conditions in the region, changing public or political views and identification of the commission's responses in terms of modified strategy, policies and operations.

APPENDIX

Specific Sub-regions (Refer to Map 3)

The sub-regions identified in Map 3 are based on more detailed criteria including,

1. growth areas and centres of subdivision and development activity and associated spin-off areas,
2. ethnic concentrations and social aspects,
3. agriculture related centres and areas,
4. rivers and transportation routes (separating force),
5. oil and gas activity areas,
6. resource base related areas,
7. marginally populated and dispersed areas,
8. economic considerations, and
9. the planner's impression of what the people in the region perceive as subregions.

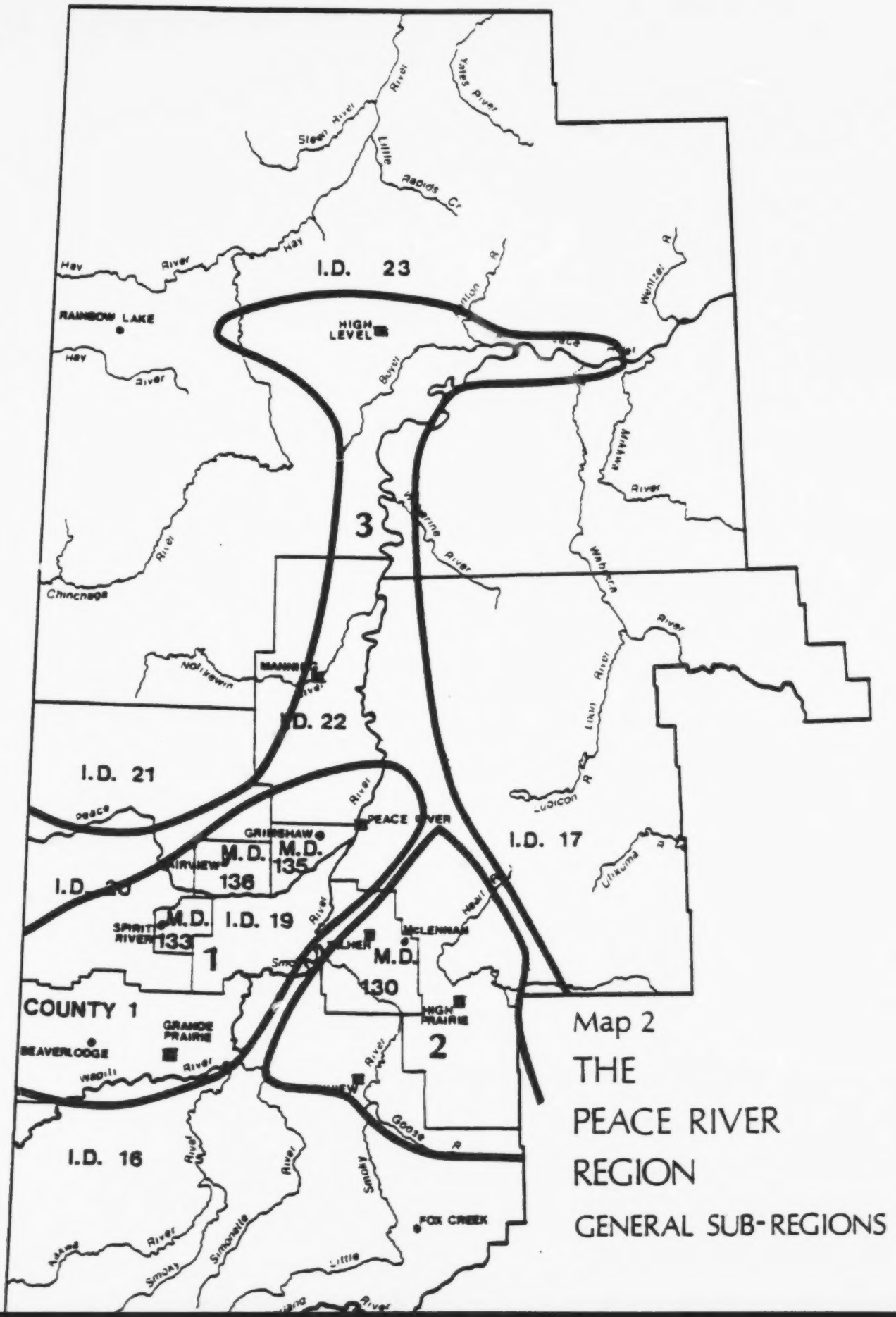
The absolute extent and boundaries of the sub-regional areas is not as important as the centres of these area. Although there was an acceptable level of agreement on boundaries there was an even higher level of congruency on centres. Seven sub-regions were identified as illustrated on Map 2.

Sub-region 1: This includes Grande Prairie and the area around County #1. It is an area of substantial subdivision and development activity as well as a major agricultural area. It has a variety of settlements including a city, town, villages and hamlets which appear to have an hierarchial order to them.

Sub-region 2: This encompasses the Peace River area including Grimshaw. It is an agricultural area with growth potential and a high degree of subdivision and development activity although less than in sub-region 1.

Sub-region 3: Spirit River seems to be the dominant settlement which serves as an agricultural service centre. It is separated from other regions by the Peace River, Smoky River and the Saddle Hills.

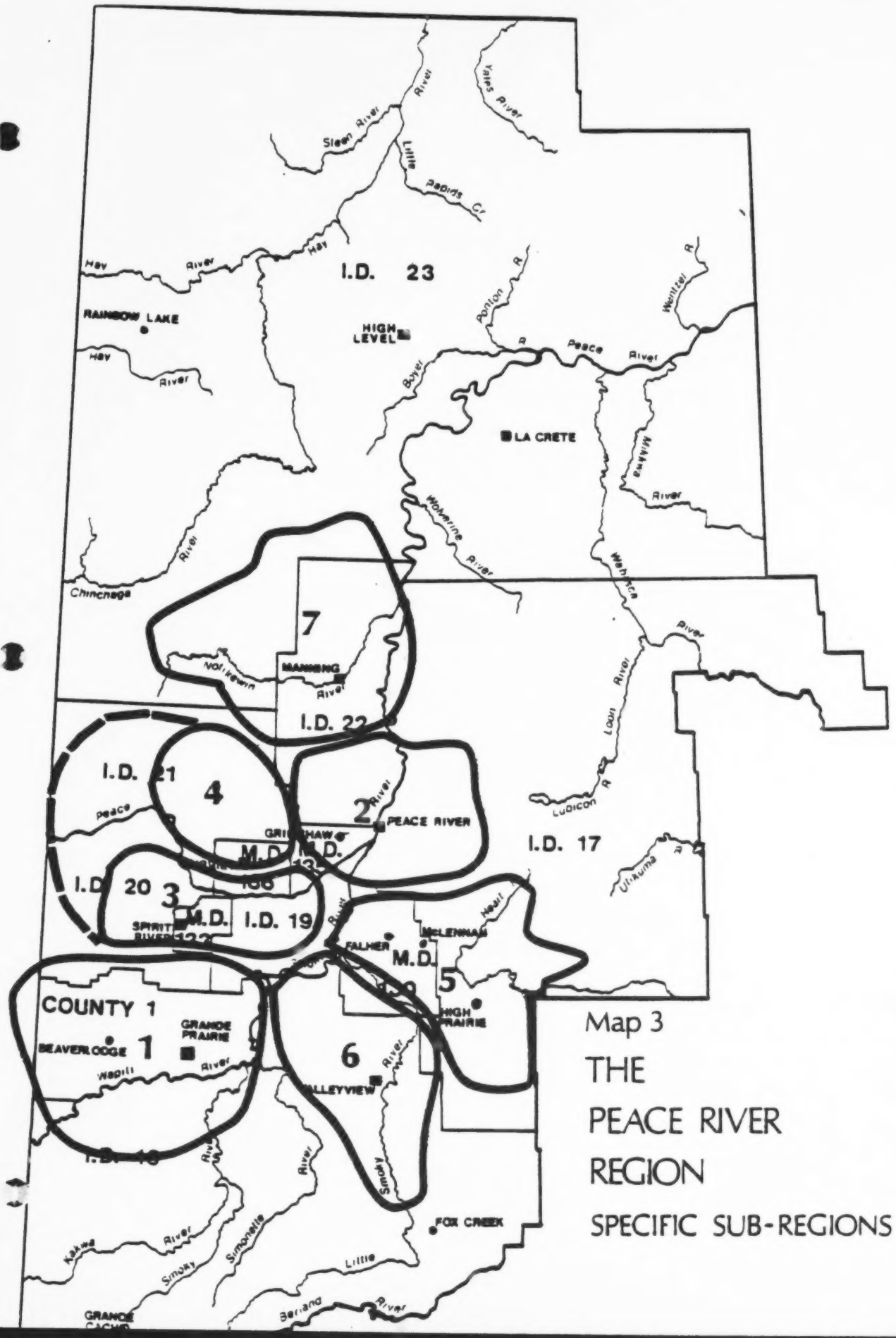
Sub-region 4:. Fairview is the apparent centre. It is also an agricultural area separated from other sub-regions by the Peace River. There appears to be a common area of influence



Map 2

THE PEACE RIVER REGION

GENERAL SUB-REGIONS



Map 3

THE PEACE RIVER REGION

SPECIFIC SUB-REGIONS

between Sub-regions 3 and 4 which extends to the westerly boundary of the region. This probably arises from the uncertainty of the dominance of Fairview and Spirit River and the fact that both sub-regions are similar in nature.

Sub-region 5: There was no dominating centre indicated although Falher, McLennan and High Prairie seem to be important settlements. There is an ethnic concentration in this area which is a distinguishing feature of the subregion. Agriculture is an important activity but this sub-region also services the resource activity to the east. There was some indication that this sub-region could be split in two with the area around High Prairie forming one sub-region oriented to the east around Lesser Slave Lake.

Sub-region 6: Valleyview is the apparent centre in this sub-region which is defined by agriculture and resource related activities. Highway access through Valleyview tends to make it important. This sub-region is also perceived as an area of development activity.

Sub-region 7: Manning is the apparent centre in this northern agricultural sub-region. Manning also tends to be the centre of development activity.

Beyond these sub-regions is the frontier. High Level, La Crete and Rainbow Lake are perceived as dominant centres in the northern frontier. Grande Cache and Fox Creek are important centres in the southern frontier.

In reviewing the results of this informal survey with the Central Places Study of 1972 a high level of congruency was found particularly with middle order trade areas and centres as identified in the Central Places Study.

A number of observations and conclusions can be drawn from this survey including the following.

1. There is general agreement among staff that there are sub-regions which may require different approaches to policy since these are somewhat different from one another.

2. There is a high degree of agreement on the centres of these sub-regions.

3. There is general agreement on the boundaries of these sub-regions.

4. There is general agreement or at least a correlation with sub-regions generated by staff and those generated by other studies. In a very general sense this is a testing of staff results although the identification criteria used in the studies and by staff are different.

POLICY TEST MATRIX

The matrix is completed by indicating the connection or impacts between the policy statement and the applicable components. It may be used to formulate policy by considering the various goals and components that should be addressed by a policy topic and then formulating policy to suit the matrix results. Or it may be used by writing policy first and then testing it against the matrix to determine its comprehensiveness.

These matrices could be included in the package of background information to be sent to the Alberta Planning Board and/or used as a guide in explaining policies to the Regional Planning Commission, local councils and the public. In any case they are designed primarily as a planner's aid and is not intended to form a part of the Regional Plan.

Regional Plan Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives will be used for the formulation of regional policy.

Goal A - Economic

The impacts of development in the Peace River Region should be directed toward achieving the greatest possible benefits for the people of the Peace Region, Alberta, and Canada.

Objectives

1. To evaluate and respond to the present and future development of non-renewable and renewable resources.

2. To conserve the agricultural land base and to encourage the maintainence and growth of the agricultural industry.

3. To encourage a balanced and diversified economic base.

Goal B - Transportation

Continued improvement of the Regional transportation and communication systems should be encouraged in order to meet the changing needs of the Region.

Objectives

1. To support an adequate rail, road, and air system to move people, manufactured goods, and resources. To support an efficient communication network for the exchange of information and ideas among communities.

2. To promote adequate transportation and communication linkages with areas beyond the Regional boundaries.

Goal C - Environment

The natural environment and heritage of the Peace River Region should be protected for present and future generations.

Objectives

1. To prepare criteria for use in the identification of environmentally and/or otherwise significant areas.

2. To ensure that any development affecting an environmentally and/or otherwise significant area enhances the significant values of the area.

Goal D - Protection

The people of the Peace River Region should be protected from the negative effects of natural and man-made hazards.

Objectives

1. To provide land use controls to promote public safety and minimize economic losses.

2. To prepare criteria for use in the identification of hazard lands.

3. To ensure that any development on hazard land does not endanger life or property.

4. To protect people and property from dangerous land uses by controlling the location of such uses and/or by limiting development in adjacent areas.

Goal E - Settlement

A high quality of life should be encouraged within the Peace River Region through a choice of rural and urban lifestyles.

Objectives

1. To encourage community identity.

2. To encourage an adequate supply and choice of housing.

3. To ensure that the service needs of the rural community are met.

Goal F - Land Use

Development within the Region should contribute to an efficient and orderly pattern of land use.

Objectives

1. To develop guidelines for urban land uses.

2. To guide the expansion of settlements in ways which complement the existing and future patterns of land use.

Goal G - Planning Framework

The planning needs of the residents of the Peace River Region should be met by a sound planning framework.

Objectives

1. To provide a planning framework which will contribute to efficient decision making by local councils and boards.

2. To develop a clear system of planning which will be understandable to the residents of the Region.

3. To provide the opportunity for citizen involvement in the planning process.

Goal H - Coordination

Cooperation and coordination of planning activities should be promoted among local councils, boards, provincial agencies and other interested groups.

Objectives

1. To provide mechanisms for communication between municipalities when joint planning issues arise.

2. To have regard for present Provincial Policy and in the future work towards mutually beneficial policies.